Has it been 10 years?

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With September now upon us, it reminds me of a late summer trip that I took with my colleagues while working at Classical Numismatic Group at the end of August 2009. What seems like just yesterday was, in fact, 10 years ago, when we were in attendance at the XIV International Numismatic Congress held in Glasgow, Scotland. This “coin nerd prom” event is conducted every six years, with rotating cities around the world acting as hosts to the proceedings. What transpires is a week of various talks with some of the foremost researchers in numismatics—mostly ancient and medieval, but with some facets of modern coins and medals as well.

While there, we were able to listen to many of these discussions along with taking in the plethora of sites around town. The architecture alone, however, was enough to fill any camera, as there was much in the way of structures to be seen. For starters, there was the venue for the congress itself—the **University of Glasgow**, established in 1451 and the fourth-oldest university in the English-speaking world…

The campus, though mostly comprising of older buildings, offers some modern architectural flair as well, as can be seen in the image above. Meanwhile, the edifices located in and around the university offer a mix of architectural styles, like Spanish Baroque with the **Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum**, Gothic with another building on the university’s campus, and Neo-Classical with the **Wellington Church**…

Moving around town, we encountered structures such as **Glasgow Cathedral**, dedicated in 1136 and the oldest cathedral on mainland Scotland. The stained glass featured below, part of the church's Great West Window entitled "The Creation," is a modern installation dating from the mid-20th century…

We also had the opportunity to travel by rail to the capital city, visiting Edinburgh Castle as well as **St. Giles' Cathedral**—the modern structure dating to the late 14th century. The stained glass was once again a focal point of my camera…

Though these digital images have helped to preserve the memory of our ventures, *along with the obvious dreary, overcast weather conditions of the entire trip*, another form of memorandum was available even before the widespread availability and use of photography: medallic art. Architecture, if done well, can lend itself handsomely for depiction on medals, and no medalists did this form of artistry better than the Wieners. Emanating from what is today eastern Netherlands and western Germany, the Wieners were a Jewish family of exceptional medalists, especially known for numerous numismatic works throughout the Kingdom of Belgium. Eldest brother Jacob, along with younger brothers Leopold and Charles, created some of the finest works of medallic art of the 19th century, and all are particularly noted for their work in the highly detailed and intricate work of architectural renderings.

In 1845, Jacob, along with brother Leopold, set out to issue a series of 10 medals focusing upon both the exteriors and interiors of famous Belgian churches. These medals—all measuring 50mm in diameter—featured a level of artistry and precision that had not yet been seen, and were a game changer in the degree of difficulty attempted in engraving…

(https://shoutout.wix.com/so/74MpTr2nF/c?w=T3EhclfbE-es2wD6KCjYhlva13xKRA9HUv-turQ8RFM.eyJ1IjoiaHR0cDovL251bWlzbWFncmFtLmNvbS9wcm9kdWN0LXBhZ2UvMTAwNzIzIiwiciI6

Once this series was completed, Jacob, this time partly in conjunction with brother Charles, focused upon a new task—a much larger series (50 in total) in a larger module than before (59mm) of the most iconic edifices in Europe, mostly comprising of places of worship...

(https://shoutout.wix.com/so/74MpTr2nF/c?w=UVZ30cWelFw0g_TU-ogWNXEui932q7REuf7CqaQ-eFs.eyJ1IjoiaHR0cDovL251bWlzbWFncmFtLmNvbS9wcm9kdWN0LXBhZ2UvMTAwNzI4IiwiciI6ImExZ

While attempting to see this goal to completion, other architectural pieces were issued, such as one celebrating, of all things, the prisons of Belgium, complete with ground plans of the structures on the reverses of the respective medals...

(https://shoutout.wix.com/so/74MpTr2nF/c?w=Fyb1zcdHzul-rW_OGM9074ZMAZt8ETBumYfacHPPd-U.eyJ1IjoiaHR0cDovL251bWlzbWFncmFtLmNvbS9wcm9kdWN0LXBhZ2UvMTAwNzU3IiwiciI6IjNlOTY

Sadly, the amount of intricate work through which Jacob pushed himself was no help to his eyesight, which began to fail, ultimately leaving the aforementioned series of 50 medals for the iconic edifices of Europe to be left at 41, nine shy of the goal. Nevertheless, the effect which these various architectural Wiener medals had upon the community was monumental, showing the bounds which could be explored by other talented artists.

This month’s upload is entirely focused upon this pursuit, with over half of the offerings being various issues from the Wieners’ series. Rounding it out are some other types clearly inspired by the majesty that the brothers brought to the spit of engraving and medallic art.

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